



## Plan Vivo Project Idea Note (PIN) Template and Guidance

### What is a Project Idea Note?

The first step in registering a Plan Vivo project is submitting a PIN, which allows the Plan Vivo Foundation to assess the applicability of the Plan Vivo Standard and System to the project, facilitate project design by providing guidance, and gives projects a platform to attract support through inclusion of approved PINs in the Plan Vivo project register.

Before writing and submitting a PIN, applicants should ensure they have consulted the *Plan Vivo basic eligibility checklist* and *Plan Vivo Standard* to check that the Plan Vivo System is applicable to their project.

### Approval and Registration

Evaluation of a PIN involves a desk-based review by the Plan Vivo Foundation. For a PIN to be approved it is necessary that the proposed project has the demonstrable potential to provide quantifiable ecosystem services and promote sustainable livelihoods over a long-term period. The key elements of demonstrating eligibility are:

- a) Organisational Capacity  
Project coordinator and partners have the organisational capacity to undertake a long-term community-led project.
- b) Eligible land-tenure  
The project applies to land over which the target communities have ownership or long-term user rights.
- c) Suitable land-use activities  
Project activities are eligible under the Plan Vivo Standard and are/will be designed to promote sustainable land-use and livelihoods, and produce quantifiable carbon benefits and additional ecosystem benefits.

### How to Apply

The report should use the headings below to present information. Applicants can reference supporting documentation where necessary. Applications (and any question relating to applications) should be submitted to the Plan Vivo Foundation at:

[alexa.morrison@planvivofoundation.org](mailto:alexa.morrison@planvivofoundation.org) OR **Plan Vivo Foundation**  
Tower Mains Studios  
18b Liberton Brae  
Edinburgh UK  
EH16 6AE

The applicant should include (in a covering letter or email) a statement that they have read and intend to apply the Plan Vivo principles in their project (see [www.planvivo.org](http://www.planvivo.org)). The application fee must be paid in full prior to PIN registration (for up-to-date information on fees see the Plan Vivo website) which is a nominal fee to cover evaluation expenses.

### Confidentiality

The Plan Vivo Foundation evaluates PINs and publishes approved PINs on the Plan Vivo website. If the applicant considers any part of the PIN to contain confidential information, they should highlight such information and provide instructions to the Foundation to remove confidential information before publishing the document.

## Contents

1	Project objectives and activities .....	3
2	Identify target groups/communities .....	3
3	Description of proposed project area .....	3
4	Ownership of carbon rights and land-tenure .....	4
5	Description of applicant organisation(s) and proposed governance structure .....	4
6	Community-led design plan submitted .....	6
7	Additionality Analysis Provided .....	6
8	Compliance with regulations and notification of relevant bodies.....	6
9	Sources of start-up funding identified .....	6

Heading	<b>1 Project objectives and activities</b>
Requirements/ guidance	<p>Max 500 words.</p> <p>Describe the objectives of the project.</p> <p>Describe all proposed project activities that will generate Plan Vivo Certificates (e.g. reforestation, agroforestry, forest conservation) and how they relate to the project objectives.</p> <p>Describe any additional activities to be supported or implemented by the project and how they relate to the project objectives.</p> <p>NB/ Applicants must demonstrate a willingness to promote the use of indigenous species and recognise that Plan Vivo activities (i.e. those generating Plan Vivo Certificates) must be limited to native and naturalised species.</p>
	<b>2 Identify target groups/communities</b>
	<p>Max 350 words.</p> <p>Identify and describe the target groups and briefly describe local organisational capacity.</p> <p><i>“Target groups” are those communities, groups and individuals that are expected to benefit from the project (e.g. rural communities living in and around a certain forest area, or women agricultural workers in a certain district).</i></p>
	<b>3 Description of proposed project area</b>
	<p>Max 500 words (excluding maps and other figures).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical environment</b> Briefly describe the physical environmental context of the proposed project, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A map with proposed project areas marked;</li> <li>✓ Identify any legally designated/protected conservation areas within, overlapping or adjacent to the project area;</li> <li>✓ Physical description of the land and habitat types;</li> <li>✓ Current main categories of land-use;</li> <li>✓ Any known local land degradation processes or trends and what are considered to be the main drivers of these processes (e.g. population pressure, charcoal production, fire, conversion for agriculture).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Socio-economic environment</b> Briefly describe the socio-economic context of the proposed project, including the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A description of local cultural groups;</li> <li>✓ Average income and main income sources in target communities;</li> <li>✓ A summary of relevant local and national governance structures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p><b>Additional information: Availability of Technical Data</b>  <i>The carbon baseline can be defined as the current status of carbon stocks or emissions (and expected changes or trends) in the absence of the project. At the PIN stage there is no requirement for a comprehensive analysis of the carbon baseline, but any information held on the carbon potential of the proposed activities may be included for additional information.</i></p>
	<p><b>4 Ownership of carbon rights and land-tenure</b></p>
	<p>Max 350 words.</p> <p>Describe the land-tenure context in the project area, and how the target communities have ownership rights for the carbon associated with proposed activities.</p> <p>Include a brief description of the typical size ranges of land-holdings.</p> <p>Describe any conflict or instability in the project area related to land-tenure that may affect the project.</p> <p><i>Plan Vivo Certificates are generated through activities where communities or smallholders have rights to implement activities and benefit from payments for ecosystem services. This can be demonstrated through land-tenure or long-term recognised user rights. Deeds of title are not strictly required if tenure can be shown to be lawful and widely recognised. If project activities are to be undertaken on government owned land that individuals or communities have use-rights for, it should be demonstrated that the government body will recognise the community's ownership of the carbon credits.</i></p> <p><i>Important questions to consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How difficult is it to prove land-tenure in the project area?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there a system of national or regional land reform underway that could affect the project?</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>5 Description of applicant organisation(s) and proposed governance structure</b></p>
	<p>Max 750 words.</p> <p>Identify which organisations, communities, groups and individuals may/will be involved in the project and what their roles are expected to be. The organisational structure must describe how the following roles will be fulfilled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- technical functions</li> <li>- administrative functions</li> <li>- social functions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• External support services (if required)</li> </ul> <p>The organisation making the application (the applicant) must provide the following information about itself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Legal status (e.g. registered NGO);</li> <li>✓ Long-term objectives of the organisation;</li> </ul>

- ✓ Brief history and achievements;
- ✓ Summary of current activities including details of scale and range;
- ✓ Personnel to be involved in the project with details of relevant skills and experience.

If the applicant organisation identifies another organisation to act as the project coordinator, the PIN should be accompanied by a signed statement on behalf of the nominated organisation that the PIN was submitted with their full consent.

*The Plan Vivo System does not prescribe a specific organisational structure; this will vary depending on the project context. More than one organisation may be involved in implementing a project. There must, however, be one organisation that takes on the role of 'project coordinator' and as such is responsible to the Foundation for conformance with the Plan Vivo Standard.*

*Below is a summary of the key responsibilities in a Plan Vivo project.*

**Administrative**

- *Registration and recording of plan vivos and sale agreements;*
- *Managing the use of project finance in the Plan Vivo and making payments to producers;*
- *Coordinating and recording monitoring;*
- *Negotiating sales of Plan vivo Certificates;*
- *Reporting to the Plan Vivo Foundation;*
- *Contracting project validation and verification;*
- *Managing project data.*

**Technical**

- *Providing technical support and training to producers in planning and implementing project activities;*
- *Developing, reviewing and updating forestry and agroforestry systems (technical specifications);*
- *Evaluating plan vivos;*
- *Monitoring plan vivos.*

**Social**

- *Conducting preliminary discussions and continued workshops with communities;*
- *Gathering socio-economic information for project registration and reporting purposes;*
- *Helping groups/individuals to demonstrate land-tenure;*
- *Advising on issues such as mobilisation, setting up bank accounts, dispute resolution etc.*

**External Technical Support/Project Development Services**

*Project co-ordinators may require technical assistance to develop certain aspects of the project. Potential areas of assistance:*

- *Assisting in technical aspects of project design and development;*
- *Providing training to project technicians;*
- *Developing carbon modelling and technical specifications;*

	<b>6 Community-led design plan submitted</b>
	<p>Max 300 words.</p> <p>Submit a plan for achieving community participation in the project. This plan must include a mechanism for ongoing consultation with target groups and producers.</p> <p><i>Participation in Plan Vivo must be informed and voluntary, demonstrable through consultation and participatory design processes. Projects should, at an early stage, initiate discussions with target groups to identify project activities.</i></p>
	<b>7 Additionality Analysis Provided</b>
	<p>Max 300 words.</p> <p>Briefly describe how the project and activities are additional, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statement that the project is not the product of a legislative decree, or commercial land-use initiative likely to have been economically viable in its own right; and</li> <li>• A description of the current barriers to implementing the proposed e.g. lack of finances, lack of technical expertise.</li> <li>• Describing how the project will overcome these barriers.</li> </ul> <p><i>Additionality is a key requirement for the sale of carbon services. A project can be described as additional where it and the activities supported by it could not take place without the availability of carbon/PES finance.</i></p>
	<b>8 Compliance with regulations and notification of relevant bodies</b>
	<p>Provide evidence (e.g. a copy of a letter or email) of notification of the relevant national regulatory body of the project proposal (e.g. national climate change focal point or department of environment).</p> <p>Provide a statement of intention to comply with all relevant national and international regulations.</p>
	<b>9 Sources of start-up funding identified</b>
	<p><i>Start-up funding is an internal issue for project developers. However, start-up funding can be a significant hurdle for new projects as carbon finance only becomes available after technical specifications have been developed, community training undertaken, and multiple other costs such as hiring staff, travel and external consulting costs have been incurred. Therefore projects are encouraged to consider potential funding sources at an early stage.</i></p>